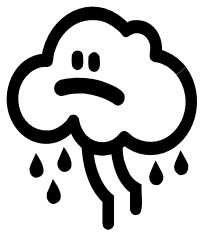


Department of Human Services

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
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Articles in Today's Clips Wednesday, May 9, 2007

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In Web tryst twist, adoptive dad charged

May 9, 2007

BY GINA DAMRON

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

A Commerce Township man has been charged with sexually assaulting his 14-year-old adopted daughter, who last week tried to run away with a man she met on the Internet.

Gerald Wilson was charged Tuesday in Novi's 52-1 District Court with four counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct, each count a 15-year felony.

Police found out about the alleged abuse while interviewing the teen after she was discovered in a Waterford motel room with Richard Carrasco, 27, of Midland, Texas. They met on Myspace.com.

Carrasco was charged last week with multiple criminal sexual conduct counts, plus accosting a child and possession of a controlled substance.

The teen told police that Wilson touched her several times over the past year, Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard said Tuesday.

There was "some very inappropriate, direct physical touching," he said.

He said Wilson, a teacher at Oxford Middle School, was arrested Tuesday. Bouchard wouldn't say whether Wilson confessed, but said, "We believe we have corroborative information."

Bouchard said the teen has been removed from the house, along with her 17-year-old sister. He said there is no evidence that the 17-year-old was sexually abused and it's not clear whether she was adopted.

"Obviously we're pleased that we learned all of the information to date and we're hopeful" the 14-year-old "can get some help," Bouchard said.

District Judge Brian MacKenzie set bond at \$4 million for Wilson. He remains in the Oakland County Jail. His next court date is May 16.

Contact **GINA DAMRON** at 248-351-3293 or gdamron@freepress.com.

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Oxford teacher accused of molesting daughter, 14

Of The Oakland Press

NOVI - The father of a 14-year-old girl who ran away from home with a Texas man she met on the Internet was jailed Tuesday in lieu of a \$4 million bond after being charged with sexually abusing his adopted daughter.

The father, Gerard Robert Wilson, a 48-year-old Commerce Township resident who is an Oxford teacher, had expressed outrage last week when a 27-year-old Texas man his daughter met on the Internet was charged with criminal sexual conduct against her.

Richard Carrasco of Midland, Texas, was jailed on a \$1.65 million bond after the daughter ran away with him. They were found at the Highlander Motel in Waterford Township, after an Amber Alert had been issued for the girl.

"Just when you think we snatched her from a bad situation, we find out she was in a bad situation beforehand," said Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard. "It is very, very sad and disturbing." On Tuesday, Oakland County Sheriff's Detective Russell Sherman detailed the girl's allegations against her father. The arrest warrant was signed by 52nd-1st District Court Judge Brian MacKenzie.

According to Sherman, over the course of the past year, Wilson became aroused while watching a sexually explicit video with the girl, squeezed her upper thighs while driving her to school, smacked her bottom and brushed against her breasts.

Additional allegations include making her show him her breasts and commenting on them, as well as rubbing against her, said Chief Deputy Prosecutor Deborah Carley.

"It explains a lot about the text messaging on the Internet," Carley said. "She was just looking for someone."

Wilson, who is a teacher of computers and audiovisual technology at Oxford Middle School, is charged with four counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct, a felony that carries a potential 15-year prison sentence.

The charges also support what Carrasco's mother told The Oakland Press - that the teenage girl alleged she lived in an abusive environment.

Juanita Carrasco of Midland, Texas, said the girl had been in contact with Richard Carrasco and his family via instant messaging for about a year. The mother said the girl complained of inappropriate comments about her physical development, as well as being rubbed against.

While she said she considered the age 14 to "be a baby" and said her son "should have known better," Juanita Carrasco also said, "Let the truth come out."

As the allegations against the girl's father were read in court Tuesday, he once shook his head but remained quiet. That was a change from his last appearance in the Novi district court, when on Friday he was vocally angry about Carrasco's alleged sexual contact with his daughter.

Before that arraignment, an angry Wilson said he wanted to see the Texas' man's face and to let Carrasco see his face. At one point, Judge Dennis Powers told Wilson he needed to sit down in court.

On Tuesday, Wilson wore an orange shirt and khaki pants. He told MacKenzie that his family had financial troubles that would affect his ability to post a bond.

MacKenzie did not seem concerned, issuing a \$1 million bond - with no 10 percent provision - for each count. After the first bond was announced, Wilson turned and stared in shock at the two detectives and then looked wide-mouthed and disbelieving at his wife.

After the arraignment, Wilson's wife declined to comment, saying only "goodbye." MacKenzie said he would appoint an attorney for Wilson.

The \$4 million bond is more than double the bond issued for Carrasco, who is due back in court today for a pre-exam conference.

The girl is in protective custody at Children's Village.

Bouchard said he had "nothing but disgust" for Carrasco for exploiting an opportunity and then said what Wilson is accused of "is even worse."

"A father should do everything in his power to protect a child and to get them the best opportunity at a quality life," Bouchard said. "To take that position of authority and that opportunity to be a huge positive in someone's life and make it into a huge negative is very sad."

According to police and prosecutors, the allegations against the father were disclosed first to a nurse during an examination and then to a forensic interviewer at Care House in Pontiac.

Carley said these newly surfacing allegations would not clear or justify Carrasco's alleged sexual contact with the girl - first after sneaking into her home on April 29 and April 30 and then at the Highlander Motel in Waterford Township after she ran away - because the law on the age of consent is very clear.

"Even if you lie about your age, that's no defense," Carley said. "The age of consent is 16."

Sex with anyone younger is illegal, she said.

But Carley and investigators said that Carrasco knew her age to be 14, even though she initially said she was 18 and he initially said he was 19. A friend of the girl's notified Carrasco that she was 14.

Carrasco is charged with third-degree criminal sexual conduct, a felony carrying a potential 15-year prison sentence, as well as fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct, accosting a minor, and possession of cocaine. Police found a loaded handgun in his motel room along with numerous cell phones, two computers and a digital scale with cocaine residue on it.

Carley said victims of sexual abuse often become enticing victims for others.

"They are preying on people like this," Carley said. "They are looking for just this kind of girl. She thinks he cares about her. It's a pathetic thing to do to another person, both by the father and this other stranger.

"They've lost their self-esteem. They are desperate for someone to love them normally."

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THE DAILY Reporter

Print this story

Judge Wood calls for child advocate program

Print Page

By Roland Stoy-Staff Writer

COLDWATER — Today in Michigan there are 20,000 children who cannot live at home because it is not safe for them to do so.

Probate Judge Fred Wood said on Tuesday there are such children in Branch County, as well, and county commissioners at their regular board meeting today will receive information on Judge Wood's visit to the personnel, plans and policy committee to advance the prospect of a Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program here.

"When I started (in 1988), we had protective services and other workers. That's no longer the case," Judge Wood told commissioners on the panel. "Now the services are contracted out, and there is no longer the hands-on help for these problems."

According to literature from Patricia Wagner of Children's Charter of the Courts in Michigan, "When abuse is confirmed our system can victimize these children once again by placing them in a strange bed, often removing them from the only environment they have known."

She said the time it can take to "fix the problem" can take many years before there is a safe and permanent home.

"High caseloads for most foster care workers in Michigan limits the time they are able to give any one case," she said. "For many, they are fortunate to be able to see a child once a month. Beyond that, workers are faced with program policies that limit the efforts they can make for a child."

Wood said other counties have signed on the CASA program, and he has not felt the need until now.

"What this does for me, it gives me more eyes and ears to decide if a child should stay in foster care or should go home," he said.

While the grassroots advocates would have to come from a volunteer effort, he told commissioners money would be involved in the need for someone to supervise and coordinate the program, possibly on a part-time basis.

Personnel chair Bill Chinery asked the judge to put together a proposal, and commissioner Rod Olney said "I think this is a viable idea."

Asked where he would get the volunteers, Wood said he would go to service groups, clubs and advertise.

"We have reached a point where we need (this program)," he said.

In other business, the full board, meeting at 4 p.m. in the courthouse board room, will hear committee motions, items of interest and liaison reports.

The meeting is open to the public, with time provided at the beginning and end of the meeting for public comment.

Security is strictly enforced.

Child care training offered by MSU Extension

Published Tuesday, May 8, 2007 3:01:49 PM Central Time

IRONWOOD -- Michigan State University Extension is offering training for child care providers, foster parents or any other interested persons.

The training will be offered at the Gogebic County MSU Extension office in Ironwood over a period of 3 days. Participants can enroll in one, two or all three days. Hours will be from noon to 6 p.m. on May 15, 16, and 17.

This 18-hour training program provides the basic components for caring for children in the area of child development, positive discipline, health and safety, play and early learning, nutrition and CPR training.

CPR will be provided free of charge to all who complete the entire 18 hour training. There will be a \$25 fee for those who only register for the CPR portion. Snacks will be provided.

Registration is required. Call Erin Ross at (906) 364-3753 to register or for more information.

ClickOnDetroit.com

Mentor To Nathaniel Abraham Jailed For Parole Violation

POSTED: 6:28 am EDT May 9, 2007
UPDATED: 6:47 am EDT May 9, 2007

DETROIT -- The man who served as mentor to Nathaniel Abraham since he was released from state supervision is in jail on parole violations after being spotted drinking in a bar with the ex-offender.

John Cromer, who has a felony record of retail fraud, was jailed on two parole violations. Corrections Department spokesman Russ Marlan says he was arrested Friday during a scheduled meeting with his parole officer.

From jail, Cromer said he wasn't drinking, but he acknowledged taking Abraham to a downtown Detroit nightclub during the Hip-Hop Summit.

Abraham's lawyer says his client is trying to keep a clean profile. Abraham was 13 when he was convicted of murdering Ronnie Greene Junior in Pontiac.

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Parental alienation divides even experts

Baldwin case renews debate

May 9, 2007

BY MELISSA FLETCHER STOELTJE

SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS

It was the voice mail message heard 'round the country.

When Alec Baldwin left a vehement, profanity-laced message for his 11-year-old daughter, Ireland, calling her a "thoughtless little pig," he came off looking like the anti-dad of the year. When he went on a talk show to explain his behavior, he said he was in the process of writing a book about "parental alienation" that would come out soon.

What he was referring to is parental alienation syndrome, or PAS, a phenomenon that reportedly is well-known among those who work in the field of divorce and custody law but one steeped in controversy.

Coined in 1985 by Richard Gardner, a controversial child psychiatrist, the term refers to the practice of one parent intentionally or unintentionally turning a child against the other parent, usually in the midst of a high-conflict divorce.

"Anyone who works in the field of forensic psychology in the context of divorce will say, yes, it's possible for a child to be turned away from a loving parent," says Michael Bone, a custody consultant in cases where PAS is involved. "Everybody knows that happens."

According to news reports, Baldwin's ex-wife, Kim Basinger, with whom he's embroiled in a custody battle, in the past has been charged with disregarding court orders concerning her former spouse's visitation rights with his daughter.

Blocking access or visitation to children is one of the classic red flags indicating possible PAS, say experts.

There's an academic debate about whether PAS constitutes a true syndrome. Some mental health experts and legal professionals have deemed it junk science, not backed up by the kind of double-blind studies that constitute scientific veracity. Some claim PAS is a ploy for abusive fathers to get custody of their kids.

"Parental alienation happens, but there's no clinical syndrome you can say in court and get away with," argues Paul Jay Fink, professor of psychiatry at Temple University School of Medicine. "Richard Gardner was a charlatan and hundreds of women and children across the country have been damaged because of his crazy idea."

But experts like Demosthenes Lorandos, a clinical psychologist and lawyer who has cowritten "The International Handbook of PAS," says the phenomenon has been well-studied and documented in more than 160 peer-reviewed articles from around the globe.

"The people who are screaming and hollering and advocating" against PAS "wouldn't know science if it bit them in the butt," he says.

There are different degrees of parental alienation, he says.

In the mild form, the alienating parent simply badmouths the other parent (called the "target" parent) to the child. He or she may interfere with visitation for the target parent.

In the moderate form, the child will begin to take on the negative view of the alienating parent and refuse to go visit the target parent.

In the severe form, the child might be abducted by the alienating parent, and the child may profess to hate the target parent.

It's not uncommon in cases of PAS, Lorandos says, for the alienating parent to falsely accuse the target parent of physical, sexual or emotional abuse of the child. Over time, the child may come to believe these charges.

The alienating parent may tell the child the target parent no longer loves them. They may withhold affection from the child if he or she says anything positive about the target parent.

"In some cases, it's clear that the child is actively being taught to hate the parent," says Richard Warshak, author of "Divorce Poison." Younger children are particularly vulnerable to this kind of emotional manipulation, he says.

What often happens is that the target parent overreacts in anger and irritation to the rejection by the child, further playing into the hands of the alienating parent's drive to portray the former as unfit.

"I don't know if that's what happened with Alec Baldwin or not," Bone says. "He may be a bit of a hothead anyway."

He is quick to note that any charge of sexual abuse of a child must be investigated thoroughly and not simply dismissed out of hand as the result of one parent trying to alienate the child.

"If there are critics of PAS, it's that it's been used in that way," Bone says. "That's a gross misuse of it. To assume that someone is not abusive when they really are is a terrible disservice to children."

The incidence of PAS may be on the rise, Warshak says, because of the high rate of divorce and angry custody battles. Experts who study PAS say it cuts across gender lines.

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THE DAILY Reporter

Print this story

ECIC representatives, others to invest in state's early childhood on May 29

Print Page

By Heather Jeffrey-Executive Editor

LANSING — "Take one day to invest in early childhood in Michigan," that is the consensus coming from the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC).

An event, Star Power Celebrating Our Rising Stars, will take place on May 29, in Lansing, and will consist of parents, teachers, advocates and kids from across the state coming together to share with state legislators the power of investing in early childhood programs.

The event is open to all, and registration can be handled by visiting www.ecic4kids.org/star_power.cfm. If planning to register, it is asked that you do so before May 14 at 5 p.m. Among those attending will be local Branch County Great Start board members.

The day will begin — for those early risers at 7:30 a.m. — with breakfast on the Capitol lawn, with a Star Powered Rally set for 8:30 a.m. on the Capitol Square East Steps. Champions of early childhood initiatives — the ECIC's rising stars — will be saluted at this time. Then, at 10 a.m., those in attendance will have the chance to attend informative briefing sessions to prepare them for the 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. legislative appointments.

During that time, those on-hand will get to educate state lawmakers on how they can impact early childhood services for all of the state's kids. Meetings will be scheduled for those who plan to attend.

To end the productive day, ECIC supporters from around the state will be on-hand for a debriefing session.

The event is free for all, and children's activities will be available, too.

E-mail info@ecic4kids.org or call (517) 371-9000 for more information.

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Stamp Out Hunger food drive to be held Saturday

Letter carriers to pick up donations for pantries.

By Catherine Kavanaugh
Daily Tribune Staff Writer

Letter carriers in southeast Oakland County want to push the envelope Saturday when it comes to collecting food for the 15th annual Stamp Out Hunger campaign.

The need is greater than ever and they have been challenged to beat last year's nationwide donations of 70.5 million by 10 percent.

"That's the goal," said Fred Whisnant, a Madison Heights carrier with a postal route in Royal Oak and Beverly Hills. "Hurricanes, tornadoes and unemployment have emptied shelves of food pantries. We're asking everyone to please, please leave non-perishable food by their mailboxes and we'll take it from there."

In Royal Oak, Madison Heights, Berkley, Pleasant Ridge and Huntington Woods, food donations go to the Salvation Army Royal Oak Citadel, which has heavily relied upon pantry.

"It's pretty empty at the moment," Major Glen Caddy said. "The food drive is well timed for us. We hope to get enough food to supply us until August or September."

The items in biggest demand include anything with protein, such as peanut butter, canned meats and soups.

"Macaroni and cheese is always a good bet, too," Caddy said. "We don't have much trouble getting vegetables, especially if kids are involved in the decision of what to donate."

Last year the Salvation Army received 17 tons of food from its five donor communities.

"That was down from the previous two years," Caddy said. "It was just a little over half of past years. Maybe the weather was too bad or people just didn't remember to put out the food."

Caddy and operators of another church-run pantry that counts on food donations from Clawson say the cupboards often are bare in the spring. Holiday food drive donations have been passed out and they know demand will spike after school lets out.

That's because 17.5 million children eligible for free school lunches need to be fed an extra meal by their cash-strapped parents, who are facing increased daycare costs at the same time, according to Caddy.

"There is a correlation," he said. "With the free lunches, parents don't have to cover that expense out of their pocket. It's tough for families. The Detroit Salvation Army actually takes food trucks to parks to feed kids and anyone else."

Whisnant said he will be thinking about the increasing number of children who rely on the pantries of non-profit groups when he picks up boxes and cans of food as he delivers mail.

"That's a big motivator," he said. "It's not just for homeless adults. Adults can skip meals but kids need a balanced diet to grow and learn."

Stamp Out Hunger is the largest one-day food drive in the United States. The only two requests from the letter carriers is that food is non-perishable and not in glass containers. In its first 14 years, the campaign has collected a total of 765.5 million pounds.

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Article published May 9, 2007

OUR OPINIONS

Fraud cases should send clear message to others

As the U.S. population ages, the financial demands on the Social Security system will increase. How the nation and its taxpayers will meet those demands is the focus of much debate in Washington, D.C.

It is important that Social Security be properly funded so that recipients get the benefits they are due in retirement. But one thing is clear: The government needs to make sure that Social Security money is not wasted and fraudulent claims are prosecuted.

That is why we are glad that nearly 600 people in west Michigan, including at least 89 in Calhoun County, have been identified as collecting extra Social Security claims. Most have simply claimed that their benefit checks were lost or stolen, then cashed both the original and the replacement checks.

It may seem like petty crime, but over the past five years officials claim it has cost the government about \$1.17 million just in six west Michigan counties.

The 600 fraud suspects were identified through "Operation Rain Check," a joint effort by local police, county prosecutors and federal agencies. Besides Calhoun, the operation also included Berrien, Ottawa, Kalamazoo, Ingham and Eaton counties. The probe yielded accusations of fraud against the Social Security Administration, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Michigan Department of Human Services.

Those convicted of misdemeanor fraud charges could face up to 93 days in jail, as well as have to repay the extra money they received.

In addition to punishing those found guilty of committing fraud, Operation Rain Check also sends a valuable message to others who are involved in similar schemes or are contemplating doing so: The government is cracking down on cheats.

That is a message applauded by taxpayers and honest Social Security beneficiaries. The federal government cannot afford to tolerate fraud as it contemplates how to provide Social Security benefits for a growing number of retired baby boomers while the pool of workers contributing to the fund shrinks.

Social Security faces enormous challenges in meeting the needs of the none-too-distant future. Fraud should not have to be one of those challenges, and we hope it won't be if efforts such as Operation Rain Check succeed.

Clinic serves uninsured, underserved

Petoskey News Review

Story updated: Wednesday, May 9, 2007 10:42 AM EDT

Congratulations to those who worked hard to open the new Lakeshore Community Free Clinic in Boyne City the end of April!

It was a homecoming for Richard “Doc” Mansfield, who had opened the Boyne Valley Medical Center in 1969.

He sold the building to the Lakeshore Community Church, and it was here that pastor Dave Crumbaugh and Cynthia Crumbaugh decided to open the free clinic. Mansfield continues his mission to serve the uninsured and underserved at the clinic.

At a time when many are losing their insurance through job loss or other circumstances, the clinic remains open to them. We’re sure as more and more people become aware of the clinic, more people will show up at the clinic doors.

The need around the area remains great. The Community Free Clinic in Petoskey had so many people coming to its facility that it had to limit patients to Emmet County-only.

During the opening day Mansfield saw close to 14 patients in the first two hours.

Kathy Helsley, the clinic director filled prescription orders and paperwork with a smile.

“I didn’t always walk around with a smile,” Helsley said. “I love it here. Helping people and their gratitude, it’s overwhelming.”

Each patient had a different story, but they all share one thing in common — lack of health insurance. A family came in with chest colds, another patient had chest pains. Another patient shared how they had to choose between medication or the office call.

“The holes, the cracks we talk about, these are the people who are here. We serve the uninsured and underserved,” Mansfield said.

And the community at large should be thankful for the effort of the Crumbaughs and Doc Mansfield to fill that need.

Schwarz: Current Health Care Model Not Sustainable

MIRS, May 8, 2007

Former U.S. Rep. Joe **SCHWARZ** said today that the current U.S. health care system is broken. Too much money is being spent on buildings and too little attention is being paid on how to best care for the uninsured, he told the Michigan Manufacturers Association (MMA) CEO Forum today.

"The care model we have today is not sustainable," Schwarz told roughly 50 manufacturing officials.

The Battle Creek ear, nose and throat surgeon said that he works at a Federally Qualified Health Care Clinic (FQHC) and that these clinics, which were first set up as part of the War on Poverty by former President Lyndon **JOHNSON**, will be the model the country will have to use to provide a "portal of entry for people without coverage."

Despite the fact that he's a private health care provider, Schwarz argued that there is currently an explosion in spending in the health care sector on large new buildings for health care providers.

"Too much money is being spent on bricks and mortar and you're all going to pay for it," Schwarz added.

The Battle Creek Republican also argued that the state's medical schools are growing too fast. Wayne State University, Michigan State University and the University of Michigan are graduating roughly 725 students from medical school each year. All but 100 are Michigan residents, the rest hailing from out of state.

Yet, he noted Oakland University and Beaumont Hospital want to open another medical school. He warned that if Michigan medical schools begin dipping too low among applicants with lower MCAT (Medical School Admissions Test) results to fill seats, the result won't be good.

During the question-and-answer session of the health care discussion, one manufacturer admitted that his firm is essentially sorting workers.

"We won't hire another smoker," he admitted. "We won't hire anyone overweight. Right now we're paying \$9,000 in insurance costs for a \$40,000 a year job."

Jay **ROSEN**, founder of Health Management Associates, advised the group to pay close attention to the State of California, which is moving toward requiring health insurance coverage, much like most states require auto insurance.

"If California goes, a long-standing taboo will be broken and you'll see it around the country," Rosen added. Rosen also noted that states are where the action is on health care reform. He handed out a table highlighting state reforms from 13 different states.

On a health care solution, Schwarz said he doesn't believe there is a solution that would make it through the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate and be signed into law by President George W. **BUSH**.

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Article published May 9, 2007

County dental program will aid uninsured

Low-income adults, as well as children would receive treatment

St. Clair County health officials have become well known to this community because of their efforts to persuade restaurant owners to go smokeless and the support of the county's workplace smoking ban.

Now, the health department is leading another cause: providing dental care to low-income patients.

More members of the poor and working poor already face health-risk factors — diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease — and most can't afford proper treatment. More than 44 million Americans don't have health insurance. In Michigan, at least 1.1 million are uninsured.

Lack of adequate dental care also puts the poor and working poor at risk. Dental problems have been linked to heart disease and stroke.

The health department already treats low-income children at its 28th Street office in Port Huron. With the United Way of St. Clair County and the Michigan Community Dental Clinic, a northern Michigan organization that provides dental treatment to low-income patients, the department hopes to expand its services with a new clinic on Electric Avenue in Port Huron, near St. Clair County Community Mental Health's new headquarters.

The health department and United Way should be commended. For years, residents of this community who can't afford adequate dental care had few ways to get treatment.

Health Department Director Jon Parsons pointed to the need:

"There are 30,000 to 35,000 uninsured individuals in this county for dental," Parsons said.

"Obviously, without insurance, it's a barrier for access. This should improve that for the community by improving access for folks."

The project's sponsors need financial support to make this important service possible. The health department is seeking a \$265,000 grant from the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan to provide the clinic with the necessary equipment and supplies.

The health department also is requesting an \$180,000 foundation grant to be spread over three years. The money would support a children's orthodontics program.

It's a shame, of course, that extraordinary provisions, such as this new clinic, must be created to fill another health-care gap. Despite the outstanding quality America's health-care industry provides, millions of Americans are left out.

The health department and United Way understand the importance of ensuring the estimated 30,000 to 35,000 residents of this county are able to receive adequate dental care. That residents here and throughout the nation can't afford health or dental treatment is immoral.

The new clinic is expected to open in 2008. Parsons estimates it would have 8,000 to 9,000 patient visits a year.

Thanks to this commitment, St. Clair County should become a better community.

Oregon dentists say they see few signs that children's dental health is improving

The Associated Press

BEND, Ore. — Dental health may not be getting any worse for Oregon children, but dentists say they see few signs that it is improving.

"I've seen a lot of it for a long time," said Dr. Cate Quas, a pediatric dentist in Bend who treats many Oregon Health Plan patients. "I see horrendous stuff in preschoolers."

Quas said she recently pulled 10 of a little boy's 20 teeth because the decay was so extensive. She said the boy told her he looked like an old man so she made him a retainer with prosthetic teeth.

"What happens is that families, they let the problem get too bad because they don't know where to go and they can't afford it. Of course it just snowballs and they end up with a toothache or an infection," said Vickie Matthews, coordinator of the Kemple Children's Clinic, which coordinates dental care for low-income children in Central Oregon.

"We have had some kids here with life-threatening infections," Matthews said.

According to a report released in November by the Oregon Department of Human Services, 56 percent of children ages 6 to 8 in Oregon have had dental caries, which is tooth decay that can lead to cavities.

Nationwide, 50 percent of children in the same age group have experienced dental caries, although the overall prevalence of tooth decay in older children is decreasing.

"Oregon has an oral disease burden. It's a silent epidemic," said Brett Hamilton, managing director of public and professional education for the Oregon Dental Association. "A lot of times people don't associate their mouth with their whole body or realize that their mouth is part of their overall health."

Quas blames too much milk or sugary drinks for much of the problem.

"The stuff you see in preschoolers is generally created when they are toddlers," she said. "It's not like between the ages of 2 and 5 the tooth decay becomes rampant."

Some parents give their children juice in sippy cups and let them carry the sugary drink around all day, or put them to bed with milk in their bottles, Quas said. Sugars in the fluids coat the teeth, giving bacteria a chance to take hold.

"The food pools on top of the teeth and the bacteria have a heyday," Quas said. "They have little parties all night long and eat into the teeth."

Instead, Quas and other dentists recommend giving children water in sippy cups or bottles instead of drinks that are high in sugar.

Often parents also don't realize that recommendations on dental care have changed, said Dr. Mike Shirtcliff, president and CEO of Northwest Dental Services in Redmond. The group of almost 300 Oregon dentists works to improve access to basic dental care in rural areas of the state.

"The mythology in dentistry is you don't treat pregnant women unless it is an emergency and you don't treat kids until they are 30 months old," Shirtcliff said.

But now the professional standard is to treat pregnant women, and babies should be seen before their first birthday. "We've been working hard to change the standard of care. It's going from old knowledge to new knowledge."

Shirtcliff's organization works to educate and encourage dentists to treat more patients with Oregon Health Plan coverage. Because the Oregon Health Plan does not reimburse at as high a rate as other types of insurance, he said, sometimes dentists are reluctant to participate.

In Central Oregon there are plenty of pediatric dentists, Shirtcliff said. But places like Douglas County, the Southern Oregon coast and areas of Eastern Oregon have a limited number of pediatric dentists to serve the population.

Dentists also recommend fluoridation of drinking water to prevent decay.

The Oregon Dental Association has been pushing the state Legislature for years to mandate that Oregon's drinking water be fluoridated, Hamilton said.

"There seems to be more and more decay," said Dr. Dean Nyquist, a Bend dentist who sees many young children with serious dental problems. "Especially in our area where we do not have fluoride in the water. It makes a big difference."

Information from: The Bulletin,

<http://www.bendbulletin.com>

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Passed bonds make way for renovation, growth

The Grand Rapids Press

Wednesday, May 09, 2007

Comstock Park

Kathleen "Kitty" Sullivan got overwhelming support to win a third term, defeating Quanda Dykstra. The 56-year-old case manager specialist with the state Department of Human Services took 85 percent of the vote. Dykstra, 37, co-owner of a plastic injection molding business, said she wanted to give minority parents a voice.

Gov: Shutdown Possible Absent June 1 Deal

MIRS, May 8, 2007

Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM** told a group of manufacturers today that the state must have its budget crisis solved by June 1 or risk shutting down government — something she said would send a "terrible message" to Wall Street and Main Street alike.

On a possible replacement for the soon to be defunct Single Business Tax (SBT), Granholm told the Michigan Manufacturers Association (MMA) CEO Forum that she's "very confident that we're going to get a resolution that provides significant relief to the manufacturing sector."

"We will have a business tax that is competitive and fair," she added.

Granholm made her remarks following the Forum luncheon and while she didn't take any questions from audience members, she did make her pitch that additional revenues need to be raised for the state in addition to replacing the SBT and finding additional cuts.

While some have suggested more draconian cuts to resolve the state's \$700 million budget deficit, she warned the business audience that unwise cuts for the sake of slashing government will result in hurting their interests.

"At some point, we cut the things that make you competitive," Granholm concluded.

She also warned against cuts that would alter the character of the state. During her remarks, she noted that one of the proposed cuts was to reduce state funding for the Meals on Wheels Program that provides food to shut-in senior citizens.

"That could save some money," Granholm said as she looked out at the audience. "Is that who we are? The unintended consequences of making decisions that are purely slashing have consequences for you."

Hitting on the twin themes of the CEO Forum, Granholm said that she's raising the key issues of health care and the impact of health care costs on manufacturers to candidates for President who come to Michigan. She also said she's stressing to candidates the need for the federal government to enforce existing trade laws.

Granholm said she was slated to continue meeting with legislative leaders on the budget at 1:45 p.m. this afternoon. Following her remarks, Granholm was asked by the media if she would be willing to accept \$700 million in budget cuts this year for a tax increase next year.

Citing her commitment not to negotiate through the media, she declined to respond.

Equal coverage?

To the Hillsdale Daily News Editor:

According to Fox TV News one Democratic lawmaker suggested iPods for all students. Nothing happened to the proposal as he didn't have much if any support among his fellow Democrats. Some media, though, according to Fox, tried to make a big deal of the proposal. It seems HDN must have been part of that media since we saw a big front page story about it on April 13.

The reporter made sure the idea came from a Democrat with a quote from Rep. Caswell, "It was Mike Simpson's party that proposed this." Simpson is a Democrat. This quote isn't true, at least according to Fox. I wonder if this proposal had come from a Republican whether there would have been such great coverage of it.

Every time someone comes up with an idea to balance the state's budget, it seems there's a front page story about someone's opposition to it. It seems some want a tax that helps themselves but others would have to pay.

We've read a lot about the financial problems of the Democratic governor. Now how about equal coverage for the Republican president with his budget with a \$530 billion deficit? Bush would eliminate food assistance for 452,000 elderly people and 50,000 pregnant and nursing women. Money for such state programs as Meals on Wheels, aging services, and child care would be cut by \$1 billion. About 300,000 working poor families would lose food stamps and free or reduced prices for school lunches for their children.

The President wants to cut Medicaid by \$26 billion. Money for inspection of nursing homes would be eliminated, but states would still have to inspect them.

The President wants to cut heating assistance to the poor by 44 percent; more than 5.5 million receive this help now. He wants to issue fewer rental vouchers. Since 2007, 150,000 vouchers have already been cut. The program that provides housing for the elderly would be cut by 25 percent — all of these cuts for the poor while wanting tax cuts for the rich made permanent.

Sincerely,

Marlin A. Field,

Hillsdale

This story was last modified: Tuesday, May 8, 2007